

"Optional Procedure," under which they measure to the tenth of one part per million, and use only the "Standard Procedure," where measurements are rounded to the nearest whole number.

MARCH IS EYE DONOR MONTH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to bring to the attention of my colleagues and the public that March is National Eye Donor Month.

National recognition of Eye Donor Month dates back to the very early days of transplantation, when corneas were the only human transplants. Now, transplantations are common medical procedures by which people may give, so that others can live better, fuller, healthier lives.

National Eye Donor Month honors the thousands of Americans who, over the past 55 years, have each left behind a priceless legacy, their eyes. Since the first transplant agency was founded in New York City in 1944, sight has been restored to over half a million individuals by means of cornea transplantation.

Eye Donor Month is also about increasing public awareness of the continuing need for donors. Many people are still unaware of how easy it is to become an eye donor. All a donor needs to do is sign a card and announce to his or her family the intent to leave behind this special gift.

I am confident that if more Americans realized the true extent of the need for transplants, many more would willingly donate their corneas, once they can no longer use them. More than 46,000 Americans will need cornea transplants this year. Thousands of researchers will need donor eye tissue to explore prevention and treatment of blinding diseases.

Our Nation's eye banks, non-profit agencies operating under the umbrella of the Eye Bank Association of America, have done a heroic job of restoring sight to blind people. Today, cornea transplantation is the most common transplant procedure performed, with an extremely high success rate of nearly 90 percent.

This incredible success rate is due in part to a meticulous screening process that separates out corneas unsuitable for transplantation. These may be used for research purposes in surgical training and medical education. So, while each donated eye is put to good use, such a selective screening process must be supported by a large number of donations.

Right now, there are simply not enough donors. We must change that. I want to encourage my colleagues to celebrate National Eye Donor Month by working closely with our Nation's eye banks to educate the American public about how they can help others to see. Let us all aim to increase the number of eyes available for transplantation, so that we may illuminate the darkness for so many of our fellow citizens.

FEMA'S PROJECT IMPACT

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I was dismayed and confused to learn that the President's fiscal year 2002 budget proposal would eliminate the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, initiative, Project Impact. I draw my colleagues' attention to this nationwide program that works with cities and counties to help reduce the destructive effects of natural disasters because so many of their citizens have benefitted from these successful partnerships.

The very first Project Impact designated community was Deerfield Beach, FL, which joined in 1997 in response to the devastating effects of hurricanes. Another pilot community, Seattle, WA, uses Project Impact funds to ensure an earthquake-resistant community by retrofitting school buildings and bridges, identifying zones of vulnerability, training homeowners, and reinforcing hundreds of Seattle-area homes. Seattle formed neighborhood disaster teams and brought in local businesses to help.

It is important to note that Project Impact is a major reason why damage to Seattle during yesterday's earthquake was minimal. Only last April, Seattle held its eighth "Disaster Saturday" at a school that had been retrofitted with non-structural seismic retrofits as part of the city's "Project Impact's School Retrofit" program. I share Senator MURRAY's appreciation for FEMA's work, as well as her concern over the proposed cancellation of this important disaster mitigation program.

Since its inception in 1997, nearly 250 community partners and 2,500 business partners across the country have joined with Project Impact. In my own State of Hawaii, all four counties are community partners to Project Impact. The 50th State is vulnerable to risks from hurricanes, torrential rains and flooding, tsunamis, droughts, earthquakes, and even wildland fires. Urban areas like Houston, TX and Tulsa, OK, as well as rural communities, like Fremont County, WY, largely rural area of about 38,000 residents, and Virginia's Central Shenandoah Valley Planning District, have joined.

Kenai Peninsula Borough and Soldotna, AK are educating their citizens about mitigation measures that can be taken to prevent damage from earthquakes, wildfires and floods. The city of Buffalo, which lies on a major fault, has joined Project Impact to help with earthquake mitigation, as well damage from snow storms and floods. A few months ago, North Carolina was named the Outstanding Disaster-Resistant State in recognition for all the work that has been done in communities across the State. In Colorado, a \$150,000 grant to a coalition in San Luis Valley was leverage into a \$268,000 Emergency Preparedness Fund. Other Colorado communities that have benefitted include Fort Collins, Delta and Clear Creek, Morgan and El Paso coun-

ties. In Elgin, IL, Project Impact helped start a pilot program to mitigate the effects of tornadoes.

Project Impact's full title is "Project Impact: Building Disaster-resistant Communities." The initiative works by empowering communities to fashion hazard mitigation responses to local concerns and needs. FEMA helps communities carry out a detailed risk assessment and create disaster resistant strategies. Communities turn these strategies into policy by revising local building and land use codes and passing bond issues to construct prevention measures that will impact the entire community.

Project Impact operates on three simple principles: preventive action must be decided at local levels, private sector participation is vital, and long-term efforts and investments in prevention measures are essential. Project Impact takes resources from a Federal agency and gives it to the communities, helping them to become stronger and self-reliant.

Since its inception, Project Impact partners have revamped their local emergency management plans, elevated flood prone properties, developed mobile demonstration models for hazard resistant construction techniques and upgraded storm water drainage systems. In addition, Project Impact communities are encouraged to exchange ideas with each other. As former FEMA director James Lee Witt stated, "... participants know that Project Impact empowers them to save lives, protect property, protect their economies, livelihoods and save their citizens from the heartache of disaster."

Everything that I hear about Project Impact points to its successes. NASA, the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Humane Society have all become Project Impact signatories in the past few months. Although the President's budget proposal states that Project Impact has not been effective, it is unclear how that conclusion was reached. We should not eliminate a program without reviewing its successes or failures. In order to evaluate Project Impact, I am requesting that the General Accounting Office review the program and measure its performance. It is only right that there be an audit of this program, which so many communities believe is an important government partnership, before eliminating its funding.

FEMA estimates that for every dollar spent on disaster mitigation, two dollars are saved in disaster response and recovery. I sincerely hope that the Project Impact communities will not be left without any Federal assistance for disaster mitigation. Roger Faris, a Seattle homeowner who thanked Project Impact for his home surviving Wednesday's earthquake without damage, said, "This is one of these non-partisan success programs that should have been expanded, not shut off."